DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 141 024 RC 009 960

TITLE Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO) Annual Report, 1975.
INSTITUTION Americans for Indian Opportunity, Inc., Albuquerque, N. Mex.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Agency Role; *American Indians; *Annual Reports; *Budgets; Communications; Comparative Analysis; Federal Government; Financial Support; *Information Dissemination; *Natural Resources; Needs; Organization; Socioeconomic Status
IDENTIFIERS *Americans for Indian Opportunity

ABSTRACT

Presenting an account of the 1975 activities and interests of the Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO is an organization which was initiated in 1970 to serve as both a catalytic and unifying force in the American Indian community), this annual report briefly describes the following: the need for AIO; facts regarding the sociceconomic status of Native Americans; Indian control of Indian natural resources; AIO's role as a liaison between the Federal government and the Indian community; AIO involvement of the non-Indian world in the support of the Indian community; information sharing (the Thursday meetings of all Washington based national Indian organizations; "Red Alerts", a newsletter designed to communicate crucial issues in a timely manner; and the information service); training of resident interns for research in connection with tribal resources; awards to outstanding Americans for Indian cpportunities; auditors' opinions; and financial statements (includes 1974-75 balance sheet; statement of support, revenue, and expenses and changes in fund balances for the year ended October 31, 1975; and statement of functional expenses for the year ended October 31, 1975 with comparative tctals for 1974). (JC)

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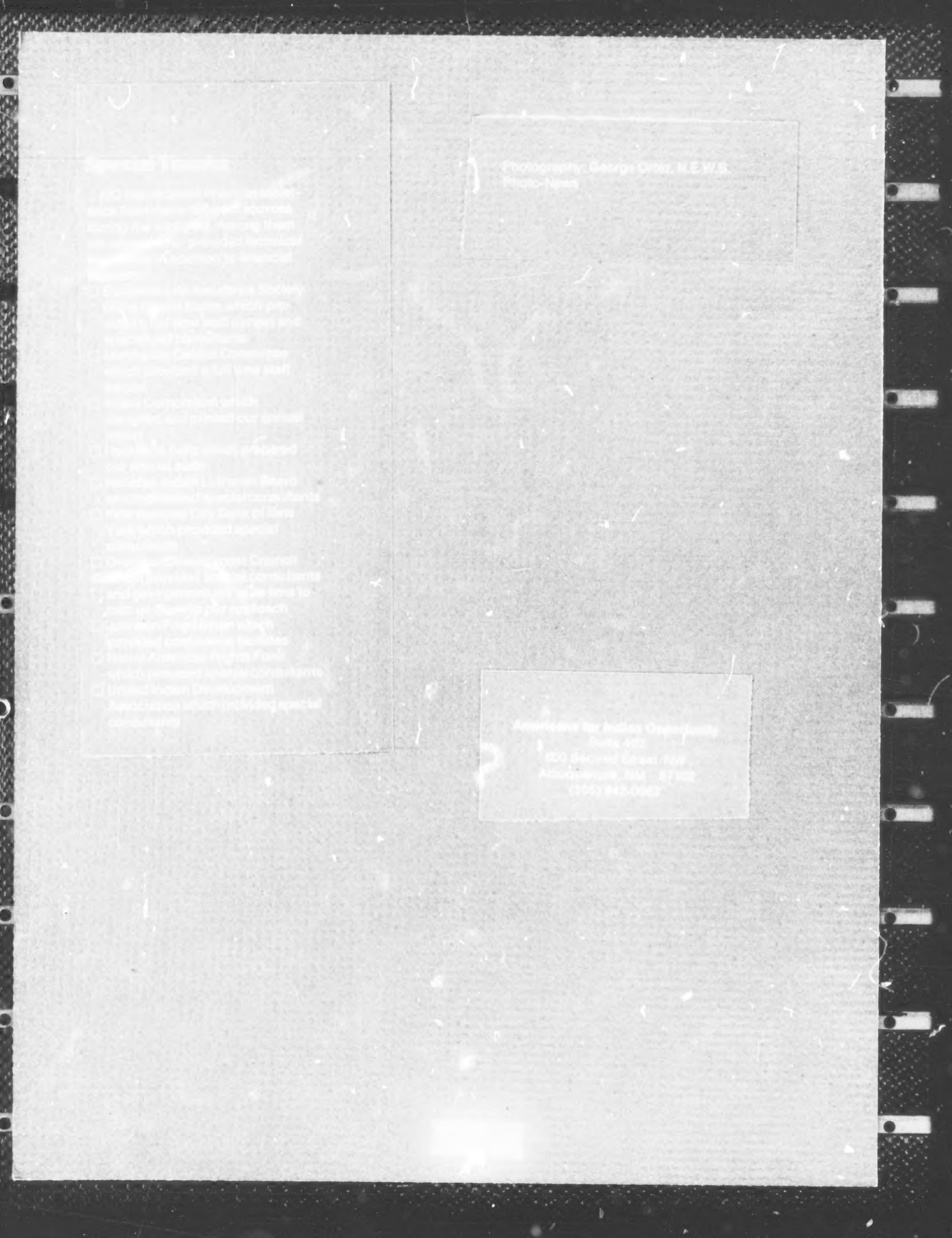

## Letter From The President

1975 was a difficult but stimulating year for Americans for Indian Opportunity as it was for the rest of the Indian community. The tightened economy, a new administration, a heightened awareness of the meaning of tribal sovereignty and its ramifications—these and other factors combined to bring a new importance to AIO's role as a catalyst for action and advocate for change.

With the knowledge that tribes own large blocks of lands containing enormous amounts of natural resources, we asked ourselves why Indians are still the poorest people in the nation. We turned to the experiences of developing nations to try to gain some perspective on the problem. It quickly became obvious that no people had gained economic sovereignty until they themselves began to control the development of their own resources. As in the case of colonies throughout the world who looked to a trust officer for second-hand management, the results had been exploitation with little real development. Thus, we began to explore new ideas and options for Indian control of Indian resource development.

We found that tribes had been forced to make decisions based on the advice and final approval of the trust officer (in this case the federal government) without any real knowledge of the true value of their resources. Basic resource inventories were scanty or non-existent. Leasing to non-Indian developers was not only the accepted practice but innovative ideas seemed to be discouraged. Many tribal governments developed under the Indian Reorganization Act lacked the structure, codes and managerial capacity to exercise true sovereignty.

The challenge was for AIO to provide a forum for exchange of information and expertise in order to find new approaches to old problems. As a result, exciting new things are happening throughout the Indian community.

Each small success added new incentives for the Board and staff to increase their efforts. Many old problems remain to be solved. Many new problems are emerging. But with help it will be done. AIO looks forward to the challenge.

LaDonna Harris

## The Need For AIO

In 1970, AIO's founders saw the need for an Indian organization broad in scope and flexible in operation, to act as an advocate for Indian people and programs, to develop model and experimental programs on a regional or national basis in response to otherwise unmet needs of the Indian community, to provide technical assistance to local Indian tribes and groups to do the things they see as necessary and desirable in their own communities, to advise and inform non-Indian institutions – governmental, corporate, religious, educational, charitable etc. – on Indian issues and on their particular responsibilities to the Indian community, and to serve as a catalyst for action while at the same time, serving as a unifying force in the Indian community.

Americans for Indian Opportunity will work with, as we have from the beginning, any Indian tribe or organization that seeks our assistance. We define our constituency as it is defined in the Snyder Act (Section 13, U.S. Code 25) – Indians throughout the United States. We expect to provide services to the Indian community as a whole – and we are unique in that we are not restricted to working with any particular segment of the Indian community to the exclusion of others. That is, we serve both reservation and off-reservation, urban and rural, federally or state recognized and unrecognized or terminated Indians.

## Consider The Facts

In a society where land ownership has traditionally been synonymous with wealth, the group which holds the largest blocks of privately owned land, American Indians, are the poorest. We have the highest infant mortality, the lowest life expectancy, the highest suicide rate, the lowest family income, the highest drop-out rate, the lowest educational level. We have the poorest health and the poorest housing. There are more of us in prison at the percentage of population than any other ethnic group, and we have the longest sentences.

Why do these conditions exist? Many government and other agencies have attempted to impose their own answers to these problems. We have found that the solutions can only come from the people who are affected. It is for this reason that we are working to seek and develop options and opportunities for Native Americans to choose their own lifestyle whether it be on their own reservations or in any other community.

## Indian Control Of Indian Resources

*"A great many American Indian tribes own extremely valuable natural resources – land, water, timber and minerals. The trouble is that government policy has encouraged the use and development of these resources by non-Indians, and has simultaneously encouraged tribal members to move to the cities for outside employment. The result is that our reservations have the highest unemployment and the lowest family income of any ethnic group of Americans.*

*"Native Americans can realize more from their resources than just a lease payment. They can also choose development alternatives which avoid the presently threatened destruction of their cultures and environment. That's why we are here. The challenge before us is to discuss and decide how Indian tribes can conserve and develop their own resources at their pace and in a manner which is economically, culturally, and environmentally sound."*

*LaDonna Harris*
*President*
*Americans for Indian Opportunity*

From the beginning of the European migration to this continent the control of the development of the land and its natural resources quickly passed from the control of the Native people to a series of outside governments. Even after the establishment of the United States government and the subsequent recognition of Indian nations as sovereign dependent nations under a special trust relationship, Indian nations have been under the domination of outside control. Development has been permitted only at the discretion of – and often the whims of – federal officials. The attitude most often reflected has been that of a dictator, sometimes benevolent, with a series of social welfare programs designed first to isolate

and then to assimilate Native peoples.

It is clear that many of the problems of Indian nations parallel problems of underdeveloped nations throughout the world. Just as many developing foreign nations are taking control of the development of their own resources, Indian nations are beginning to move to control the development of their own resources.

During the past year and a half, AIO has conducted a series of seminars with Indian decision-makers and people who have had experiences with foreign developing nations looking at tribes as developing nations. The seminars have featured tribes who have successful tribally owned and managed enterprises as well as individual Indians with expertise in finance, business management, tribal structure, law, and other disciplines needed by Indians. In addition, AIO included corporate and government officials who have not traditionally worked with Indians.

AIO began with a national meeting held at Reston, Virginia, in September of 1974. Two regional seminars were held during 1975, one in Billings, Montana, for the tribes of the Northern Plains area and one in Racine, Wisconsin, for the tribes in the Great Lakes area. Additional seminars are planned in areas such as the Northwest and Southwest Regions.

Support for these seminars has been received from the Economic Development Administration, the Johnson Foundation, the Overseas Development Council, Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, the First National City Bank of New York, Native American Rights Fund, United Indian Development Association, MacDonald Corporation and other contributors.

The seminars have resulted in an increased emphasis on tribal ownership and control. New ideas as alternatives to leasing have been developed. New ways to utilize government programs for the benefit of tribes have been discussed. A new understanding of the rights of ownership and the importance of strengthening tribal structure to enhance tribal sovereignty has taken hold.

## Federal Agency Liaison

The federal government has a special trust responsibility to Indian people established by treaty and legislation to protect the inheritance of present tribal members. It is for this reason that AIO has felt the responsibility to act as an advocate and provide liaison with the executive branch of the government.

The transition of administrations in the White House in the aftermath of the Watergate crisis continued to present enormous obstacles to Indian country. New appointees to high level positions charged with administering the trust responsibility had, in many instances, little knowledge of what this responsi-

bility actually involved. AIO, along with other Indian groups, met with these federal officials throughout the year to stress the importance of responsive policies in Indian affairs. During this time, Americans for Indian Opportunity met with department heads on the White House staff, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Labor, Department of Agriculture and others in order to voice the concerns and frustrations that indian people had experienced with each. In addition, AIO has worked tirelessly toward eliciting responsive policies in several agencies which have historically been closed to Indian country. Consequently, several agencies are currently attempting to formulate affirmative policies that involve Indian country for the first time.

For example, the President of AIO, while serving as a member of the Consumer Advisory Committee for the Federal Energy Administration, reminded FEA officials that Indian tribes own large deposits of coal and other energy resources. The President insisted that the tribes be consulted before a national energy policy was implemented. AIO then agreed to arrange a meeting between the energy owning tribes and FEA officials. After three such consultations, the tribes organized themselves into a permanent organization, the Council of Energy Resource Tribes. AIO believes this is an important step for inter-tribal agreements for protection and development of natural resources. FEA has now acknowledged its trust responsibility and is consulting with the tribes directly.

The Environmental Protection Agency has also recognized its responsibility to tribal governments as a result of AIO's continuing efforts to inform executive departments. The President of AIO was invited to meet with EPA officials from both regional and national offices to discuss the implementation of their program with tribal governments.

AIO has supplied advice and assistance to several of the task forces of the American Indian Policy Review Commission. Hopefully the recommendations of the Commission will bring about substantial change.

AIO has established a continuing relationship with the various offices within the Department of Justice. Continued complaints from the Indian community caused AIO to organize a group of national Indian organizations to meet with the Assistant Attorney General regarding the conflicts of interest within the Department on the trust responsibility as well as FBI dealings with the Indian community. As a result, the Justice Department has appointed an interdepartmental task force to draw up a plan for reorganization to more effectively deliver services to the Indian community. AIO has submitted recommendations to the Attorney General which are presently being considered. AIO, of course, cannot lobby on legislation as an organization because of our tax exempt status. Instead, AIO concentrates on assuring that the implementing of regulations meet the needs of the Indian community within the intent of the legislation.

## Involving The Non-Indian World

Realizing that the non-Indian world can play an affirmative and important role in supporting the Indian community, AIO has continued its dialogue with all segments of American society.

- AIO met with many church organizations to discuss the kinds of Indian programs that they have and changes that might be more beneficial to Indian country.
- AIO continued to address university groups and other non-Indian people in order to sensitize the general public to Indian country from historical, cultural and economic perspectives.
- AIO continued to meet with corporation executives to encourage them to include Indians when considering their corporate responsibility to their total community.
- AIO has been involving corporations in providing technical assistance at various levels as a supplement to funding since many have the expertise for certain types of enterprises.

## Information Sharing

*Thursday Meeting*

AIO continues its "Thursday meetings" of all the Washington based national Indian organizations, "Indian desks" in federal agencies, and educational and religious institutions. The resulting cooperation has been the key to effecting many changes this year. It has enabled Indians to pool their small staffs, and their knowledge to the benefit of the Indian community as a whole and give all Indians confidence to show leadership on pressing issues.

*Red Alert*

AIO has continued its efforts to inform the total Indian community of crucial issues in a timely manner. The most prominent vehicle for this is the preparation of a newsletter – "Red Alerts" – which is mailed to all Indian tribes and organizations. The subject matter ranges from government program information on funding sources or new regulations to announcement of impending policy decisions.

*Information Service*

During the past few years, Indian people have exerted an enormous effort towards making the concept of "self-determination" a reality. As this effort (collectively and separately, as tribes and individuals) was intensified, an enormous number of new kinds of organizations were needed for Indian people to solve their own problems, retain their cultures and lifestyles, and to develop economically. This positive trend has also brought a new problem of communication between Indian organizations themselves as well as with the non-Indian world. Attempting to locate organizations working on a specific problem on a local or even a national level has become more difficult.

With funding provided by Mobil Oil Company, AIO has been attempting to locate and contact this vast myriad of organizations in order to obtain information regarding the types of projects they are currently endeavoring to implement. With this information, AIO will assist in solving the communication problem by referring other Indian organizations who are seeking assistance, or non-Indian individuals or groups who desire to become involved, to specific organizations with programs of mutual interest. The project has been difficult due to the vast numbers involved, but has been rewarding in that we have been able to effectively provide this type of service.

## Training

Americans for Indian Opportunity trained several resident interns this year from Dartmouth College, University of California at Berkeley, State University of New York, Mount Vernon College, American University, University of Maryland and George Washington University. Their work assignments have centered on research in connection with our tribal resources project.

## Outstanding Americans For Indian Opportunity

The Board of Directors of Americans for Indian Opportunity presented the first annual awards for distinguished service to the Indian community to the Honorable James Abourezk, Senator from South Dakota, and the Honorable Sidney Yates, Congressman from Illinois. Both Senator Abourezk and Congressman Yates have consistently championed the causes of the Indian community.

## Auditors' Opinion

Americans for Indian Opportunity, Inc.:

We have examined the balance sheet of Americans for Indian Opportunity, Inc. as of October 31, 1975 and the related statements of support, revenue, expenses and changes in fund balances and of functional expenses for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial position of Americans for Indian Opportunity, Inc. at October 31, 1975 and the results of its operations and changes in fund balances for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles applied, except for the adoption of the policies of capitalizing property, recording depreciation expense and recording donated services as indicated in Note 1, with which we concur, on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

*Haskins & Sells*
December 19, 1975

# Americans For Indian Opportunity, Inc.

Balance Sheet
October 31, 1975 and 1974

| Assets | 1975 | 1974 |
|---|---|---|
| **CURRENT FUNDS / General Unrestricted** | | |
| **Cash:** | | |
| In banks and on hand | $ 5,199 | $15,177 |
| Savings account | 45,968 | 50,367 |
| Total cash | 51,167 | 65,544 |
| **Receivables:** | | |
| Pledge receivable | | 3,000 |
| Accounts receivable | 1,013 | 169 |
| Employee advances | 3,030 | 877 |
| Total receivables | 4,043 | 4,046 |
| TOTAL | $55,210 | $69,590 |
| **CURRENT FUNDS / Restricted** | | |
| **Cash** | $ 5,458 | |
| **Due From General Fund** | 1,993 | $ 9,393 |
| **Grants Receivable** | 90,639 | |
| TOTAL | $98,090 | $ 9,393 |
| **PROPERTY FUND** (Note 1) | | |
| Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment – At cost less accumulated depreciation: 1975, $7,774; 1974, $6,188 | $ 9,066 | $ 4,957 |
| TOTAL | $ 9,066 | $ 4,957 |

*See Notes to Financial Statements.*

| Liabilities and Fund Balances | 1975 | 1974 |
|---|---|---|
| **CURRENT FUNDS / General Unrestricted** | | |
| Accounts Payable | $ 3,793 | $ 2,725 |
| Payroll Related Withholdings | 924 | 1,633 |
| Deferred Revenue – Pledge receivable designated for future periods | | 3,000 |
| Due to Restricted Funds | 1,993 | 9,393 |
| Total liabilities | 6,710 | 16,751 |
| General Fund Balance (Note 1) | 48,500 | 52,839 |
| TOTAL | $55,210 | $69,590 |
| **CURRENT FUNDS / Restricted** | | |
| Accounts Payable | $ 1,346 | |
| Deferred Revenue – Designated for future periods | 94,751 | |
| Total liabilities | 96,097 | |
| Fund Balances: | | |
| Supplemental Reading Series | | $ 7,400 |
| Western New York Youth Program | 1,993 | 1,993 |
| Total fund balances | 1,993 | 9,393 |
| TOTAL | $98,090 | $ 9,393 |
| **PROPERTY FUND** (Note 1) | | |
| Fund Balance | $ 9,066 | $ 4,957 |
| TOTAL | $ 9,066 | $ 4,957 |

# Americans For Indian Opportunity, Inc.

## Statement of Support, Revenue, and Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances for the Year Ended October 31, 1975

**Public Support and Revenue:**

Public support:
- Grants and contributions
- Direct solicitations
- Donated services (Note 1)
- Gifts in kind (Note 1)
- Other

Total public support

Revenue:
- Interest

Total revenue

Total support and revenue

**Expenses:**

Program services:
- Community services
- Education and information dissemination
- Federal agencies liaison
- Natural resources

Total program services

Supporting services:
- Fund raising
- Management

Total supporting services

Total expenses

Excess (Deficiency) of Public Support and Revenues over Expenses

Returned to Donor

Fund Balance at Beginning of Year

Fund Balance at End of Year

*See Notes to Financial Statements.*

| | 1975 | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CURRENT | | | |
| General Unrestricted | Restricted | Property Fund | COMBINED TOTAL |
| $123,475 | $20,484 | $5,695 | $149,654 |
| 16,588 | | | 16,588 |
| 35,614 | | | 35,614 |
| 5,110 | | | 5,110 |
| 5,533 | | | 5,533 |
| 186,320 | 20,484 | 5,695 | 212,499 |
| 2,511 | | | 2,511 |
| 2,511 | | | 2,511 |
| 188,831 | 20,484 | 5,695 | $215,010 |
| 8,898 | 96 | 119 | $ 9,113 |
| 20,296 | 2,857 | 244 | 23,397 |
| 29,656 | 7,887 | 363 | 37,906 |
| 63,555 | 9,249 | 430 | 73,234 |
| 122,405 | 20,089 | 1,156 | 143,650 |
| 35,001 | 1,145 | 171 | 36,317 |
| 35,764 | 1,150 | 259 | 37,173 |
| 70,765 | 2,295 | 430 | 73,490 |
| 193,170 | 22,384 | 1,586 | $217,140 |
| (4,339) | (1,900) | 4,109 | |
| | (5,500) | | |
| 52,839 | 9,393 | 4,957 | |
| $ 48,500 | $ 1,993 | $9,066 | |

# Americans For Indian Opportunity, Inc.

## Statement of Functional Expenses For the Year Ended October 31, 1975 with Comparative Totals for 1974

| | Program Services | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Community Services | Education and Information Dissemination | Federal Agencies Liaison |
| Salaries and payroll taxes | $6,443 | $13,310 | $20,750 |
| Fringe benefits | 559 | 1,322 | 2,390 |
| Total salaries and related expenses | 7,002 | 14,632 | 23,140 |
| Professional fees | 92 | 92 | 184 |
| Office supplies, printing and postage | | 1,872 | 241 |
| Telephone | 628 | 1,295 | 2,019 |
| Occupancy | 707 | 1,457 | 2,271 |
| Rental of equipment | 221 | 456 | 710 |
| Travel and conferences | | 635 | 7,538 |
| Miscellaneous | 344 | 2,714 | 1,440 |
| Total expenses before depreciation | 8,994 | 23,153 | 37,543 |
| Depreciation | 119 | 244 | 363 |
| TOTAL | $9,113 | $23,397 | $37,906 |

### Notes To Financial Statements October 31, 1975

**1. Accounting Policies**

The format of the accompanying financial statements was revised to conform, in all material respects, with that set forth by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants in its industry audit guide, "Audits of Voluntary Health and Welfare Organizations." Certain reclassifications were made to expenses and the general fund balance for the year ended October 31, 1974 in order to present them on a comparable basis with those of the current year.

During the year ended October 31, 1975 the Corporation adopted the policy of capitalizing property and recording related depreciation expense. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements for the year ended October 31, 1974 have been restated to give retroactive effect to property acquisitions of $1,147 and the related depreciation expense of $1,338. Property acquisitions from the Current Fund are no longer shown as expenses in the statement of combined support, revenue, expenses, and changes in fund balances, but will be shown in total as another change in fund balances. The Corporation follows the practice of capitalizing all purchases of property in an amount of $50 or more. Depreciation of property is provided on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of the assets.

| | | Support Services | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Natural Resources | Total | Fund Raising | Management | Total | Total 1975 | 1974 |
| $33,746 | $ 74,249 | $ 9,358 | $14,150 | $23,508 | $ 97,757 | $118,897 |
| 2,890 | 7,161 | 1,087 | 1,548 | 2,635 | 9,796 | 7,067 |
| 36,636 | 81,410 | 10,445 | 15,698 | 26,143 | 107,553 | 125,964 |
| 11,614 | 11,982 | | 6,194 | 6,194 | 18,176 | 2,770 |
| 2,021 | 4,134 | 16,571 | 7,072 | 23,643 | 27,777 | 35,638 |
| 3,295 | 7,237 | 904 | 1,381 | 2,285 | 9,522 | 12,381 |
| 3,707 | 8,142 | 1,018 | 1,553 | 2,571 | 10,713 | 12,255 |
| 1,158 | 2,545 | 318 | 486 | 804 | 3,349 | 2,634 |
| 7,912 | 16,085 | 4,299 | 3,248 | 7,547 | 23,632 | 30,021 |
| 6,461 | 10,959 | 2,591 | 1,282 | 3,873 | 14,832 | 27,985 |
| 72,804 | 142,494 | 36,146 | 36,914 | 73,060 | 215,554 | 249,648 |
| 430 | 1,156 | 171 | 259 | 430 | 1,586 | 1,338 |
| $73,234 | $143,650 | $36,317 | $37,173 | $73,490 | $217,140 | $250,986 |

All contributions are considered to be available for unrestricted use unless specifically restricted by the donors.

Donated materials are recorded at estimated fair market values which are considered reasonable. Donated services have been recorded at amounts paid individuals in equivalent positions, or at amounts indicated by the donor in the case of professional services. Other donated services of a substantial number of volunteers who have donated significant portions of time in the organization's program services and fund raising efforts are not shown in the accompanying financial statements inasmuch as no objective basis is available to measure the value of such services.

**2. Comparative Statements**

The balance sheet and the statement of functional expenses for fiscal 1974 are presented for comparative purposes. Americans for Indian Opportunity, Inc. did not maintain records prior to the year ended October 31, 1975 to indicate functional allocations and, accordingly, no comparative figures are presented on the statement of support, revenue, expenses and changes in fund balances.

## Board of Directors

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*President of United Steelworkers of America*
*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Lionel Bordeaux, Sioux
*President, Sinte Gleska Community College*
*Rosebud Sioux Reservation*
*Rosebud, South Dakota*

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*Executive Council of the Episcopal Church*
*New York, New York*

Edgar Bowen, Coos-Oregon
*Box 116A Sitkum*
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Terry Brown, Karok
*Special Assistant to the Commissioner*
*Bureau of Indian Affairs*
*Washington, D.C.*

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*New York Life Insurance Company*
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Ada Deer, Menominee
*Chairperson, Menominee Common Stock and Voting Trust*
*Keshena, Wisconsin*

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*Idaho Inter-Tribal Policy Board*
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*New York, New York*

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*Former Director, Small Tribes of Western Washington, (STOWW)*
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*President of Americans for Indian Opportunity, Inc.*
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*Former State Senator*
*Juneau, Alaska*

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*South Bend, Indiana*

Minerva Jenkins; Apache
*Member, Fort Mojave Tribal Council*
*Mojave Valley, Arizona*

Louis LaRose, Winnebago
*Chairman of Winnebago Tribe*
*Director, American Indian Satellite Community College*
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*Member, Tribal Council of Northern Cheyenne*
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Philip Martin, Choctaw
*President*
*National Indian Management Service, Inc.*
*Philadelphia, Mississippi*

Grace McCullah, Navaho
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*Indian Development District of Arizona*
*Phoenix, Arizona*

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*Pulitzer Prize Winning Author of House Made of Dawn*
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Joe Dan Osceola, Seminole
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Elma Patterson, Tuscarora
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*American Indian Policy Review Commission*
*Washington, D.C.*